The Lions' Pride

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Lightning Strikes: New Online Literary Magazine

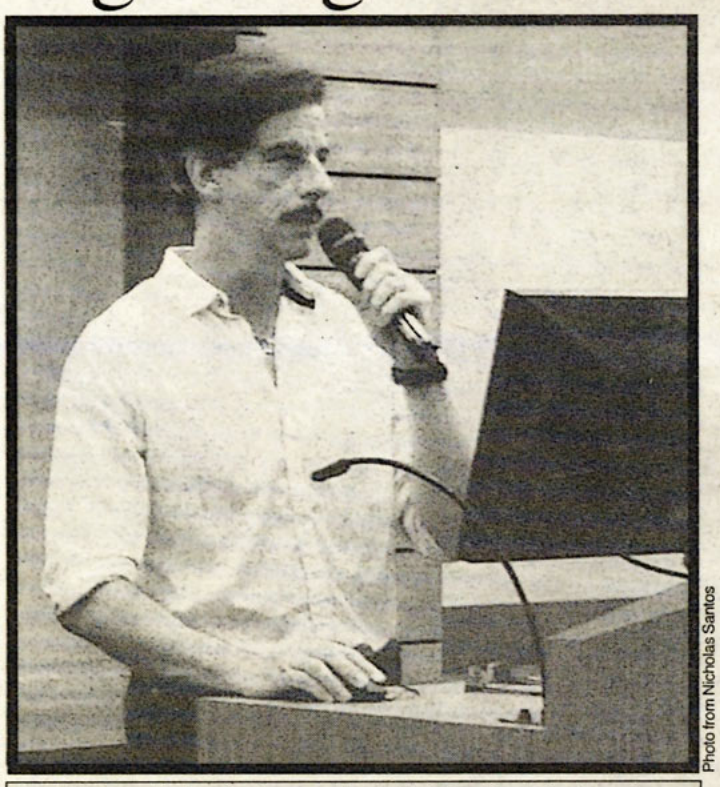

Photo from Nicholas Santos

Dr. Jeff Karon is the designer of the Lightning Key Review site, being the one to bring to life an idea that was about three or four years in the making.

By Nicholas Santos
Staff Writer

"Lightning Key Review," Saint Leo University's brand new online literary magazine, held an official launch on March 5. The launch was celebrated in TECO Hall with a thorough introduction of the website and a series of readings from four of the website's featured writers.

"Lightning Key Review has been in the 'dream stage' for three or four years," said Dr. Kurt Wilt, Department Chair of English, Fine Arts, and Humanities. Wilt was the first to introduce the official launch of the titular literary magazine. "Now it's become a reality with the help of Jeff Karon who designed the website."

The website, accessible since the launch event, aims to provide a community-like setting through which writers will be able to share, analyze, and gain inspiration from one another's works. It hopes to achieve what Saint Leo University's home literary magazine—the Sandhill Review—cannot: give writers from all over the world a chance to express their works to one another. The magazine will be available to people other than the University's students, staff, or alumni. The site also aims to gain partnerships with other literary magazines across the world; currently, they have four.

To illustrate this idea of breaking free from limitations, Dr. Jeff Karon, an accomplished Visiting Instructor at the University of South Florida, designed the website with a theme of unity in mind. For example, the name "Lightning Key" refers not only to the literary aspects of the magazine, but also to the idea of uniting various islands of writers together—just like the Florida Keys.

"Kurt Wilt and Patrick Crerand asked me to design not just a website, but something different—something that would allow us to create a new kind of literary magazine," said Karon.

At the event, Dr. Patrick Crerand, Assistant Professor of English, introduced the four guest writers who came to the launch to show their support for the site. Each guest participated in a reading of about two or three of their works, including those which were published on the website.

The four guests who attended were not the first to have to their work published on the site; that honor was given to Joseph Millar, who once hosted a poetry reading of his own at the University earlier this semester.

The attendees who represented "Lightning Key Review" through their works were Silvia Curbelo, John Henry Fleming, Peter Meinke, and Ira Sukrungruang. These writers are highly respected and expressed their joy in being in TECO Hall for the launch.

Peter Meinke, who is the poet laureate of Saint Petersburg, Fl, said that it was "an honor to represent and be a part of Lightning Key Review."

On the "Lightning Key Review" site, visitors will be able to view the profiles and collections of writers who have their work published there. Also, listed on the site are various quotes, which serve to inspire topics for curious writers.

"I'm totally excited for the Lightning Key Review site. It gives writers a great chance to share their talents and expose themselves to other writers and types of writing. I used to think that Twitter was the only way I could share my writing, but with this site, I see there will be a greater chance for more writers to get inspiration and create a mood for their writing," said Sophomore Marcos Pacheco.

Lightning Key Review website: www.lightningkeyreview.com

New Outlet Mall Planned to Open up in Wesley Chapel

By Thomas Buckley
Contributing Writer

If you have been to Orlando, you have probably notice the enormous outlet malls that they have there. If those outlet malls are "your thing," you will probably be excited to hear that a new outlet mall is planned to be opened up within the next few years in Wesley Chapel.

The location of the new mall is going to be at Exit 275 on Interstate 75, the large, empty, cleared land area where State Road 56 and Interstate 75 meet. This is the same exit that many people take to go to the Shops at Wiregrass. The name of the project is called the Cypress Creek Town Center.

"With the potential opening of this mall, I think that it will bring great opportunities for jobs for Saint Leo students, and will be a good addition to the surrounding community," said Sophomore Tyler Puchalski.

The project began back in 2004 when Pasco County gave the green light for the project, according to TBO. In 2007, the Army Corps of Engineers granted a permit to begin construction. The original Cypress Creek project was set to be finished in 2010, but construction never got completely off the ground. Construction stopped in 2008 when rain flooded the construction site and drained into Cypress Creek, polluting the water. Cypress Creek is also a tributary of the Hillsborough River, which is where much of Tampa's fresh drinking water comes from.

The original plan for the mall was for it to be a strip mall with "big box" stores: such as Kohl's, Super Target, restaurants, and a possible movie theater. It would be much similar to the GROVE at Exit 279 where State Road 54 meets Interstate 75. However, Simon Property Group, which is a real estate investment trust company with over 300 malls in 6 different countries, recently became a developer of the project.

There are two other developers working on the project: The Jacobs Group and Sierra Properties. The developers own three different pieces of land and are working together to develop the 510 acres region. The Simon Property Group will be developing the 1.3 million square foot Premium Outlet Center on a 50 acre property, the Jacobs group will develop another 50 acres for retail stores and restaurants, and Sierra Properties will develop 40 acres for hotels, offices, and a possible subdivision.

Since Simon joined part of the development project, Saks Fifth Avenue has announced plans to open up a retail location in the Cypress Creek Town Center. There is also a possibility that Nike, Coach, Calvin Klein, J. Crew, and Banana Republic will open up retail locations too.

"I think that this new mall will influence students to spend more money which they should be saving," said Sophomore Orlando Rolim.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

Captain Phillips

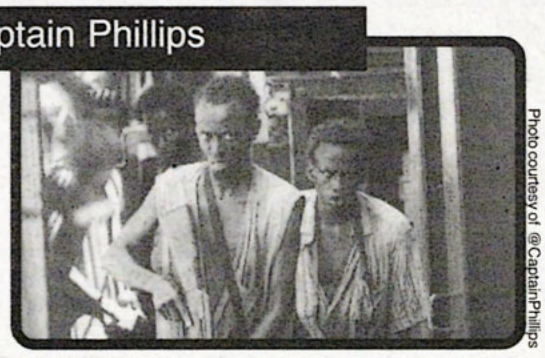

Photo courtesy of @CaptainPhillips

Rayvon Owen

Photo courtesy of @RayvonOwen

LEGO Movie

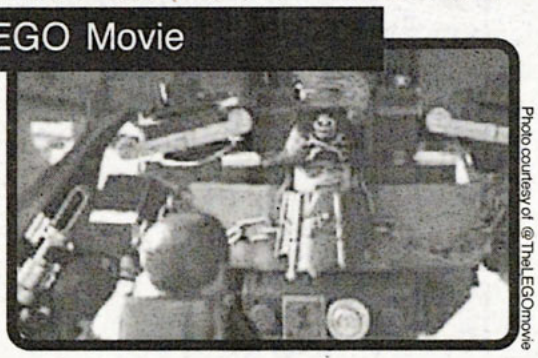

Photo courtesy of @TheLEGOmovie

From the Benedictine Sisters

Celebration of Life 45,655 Days Later!

from the Benedictine Sisters of Florida

The **Benedictine Sisters of Florida, St. Leo, Florida** were celebrated in style by friends, family and donors Friday evening, February 28th. The Gala - ***Recall the Past, Celebrate the Present and Embrace the Future*** honored the Sisters' 125 Years of serving God and the Pasco County community. Held at the Tampa Bay Golf & Country Club and chaired by Gerri Jackson, the event was a sell-out and raised $24,000 for the Sisters and their ministries.

Local community and business leaders, members of the clergy including Bishop Robert Lynch of the St. Petersburg Diocese and Saint Leo University President Dr. Arthur Kirk, Jr. praised the Sisters and those who came before them for their dedication and hard work in making a difference in the lives of others.

Sister Roberta Bailey, OSB, Prioress talked about the memories of all the women who lived the organization's past – those who endured the hardships and lived through many challenges over their 125 year history. "We honor or 'mothers,' we tell and retell their stories and are uplifted by the inspiration of everyday pleasures. Their stories are preserved because we want never to forget that the opportunities we have today were purchased at the great price of their saving, scrimping and salvaging. What firm faith and incredible courage our founding Sisters must have had. In following their lead, we strive to be better, to be compassionate and caring; to keep faith with our founding ideals and to enflesh them into a reality worthy of those who will inherit what we build today. Our hearts are full with the affirmation given by everyone involved in this gathering that honors so many on whose shoulders we stand."

The Florida Benedictine women's experience and ministries continue as they embrace the future in a new Holy Name Monastery being built across the street from their current building.

The Sisters and all those present, delighted in Bishop Lynch's announcement of **a $25,000 Challenge Match** to the building fund if the Sisters raise $25,000 during the month of March!

If you would like to help the Sisters with a contribution for the New Holy Name Monastery and ensure the match, checks are payable to the Benedictine Sisters of Florida, PO Box 2450, St. Leo, FL 33574.

For more information contact Faith Pridmore, Director of Mission Advancement at (352) 588-8320 or email: hnmdevelopment@saintleo.edu. Visit us on Facebook: **Benedictine Sisters of Florida** and/or our web-site at www.benedictinesistersoffl.org.

Photo Courtesy of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida

From left to right: Fr. Stephan Brown, Bishop Robert Lynch, S. Roberta Bailey, Dr. Arthur Kirk, Jr.

Photo Courtesy of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida

Even Chair, Gerri Jackson, Faith Pridmore, Janet Rodriguez Collura

THE LIONS' PRIDE

(352) 588-8316

Student Activities Building, Office 106

33701 State Road 52 Saint Leo, FL 33574

Letters to the editor to The Lions' Pride should be no more than 500 words in length and should not include profane or slanderous language. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, spelling, and libel; as well as the right to publish or not. All submissions should be sent to **thelionspridenewspaper@gmail.com**. Letters to the editor must be submitted with student's name, year, and major. Faculty and staff members must include rank and department. Please include a phone number (not a publication) so we can verify authorship.

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Editorial

Spring Cleaning: Getting Rid of Clutter

By Kelanie Cuadrado
Contributing Writer

It is officially that time of year again: Spring Cleaning. Even students who consider their room spotless should take the time to rearrange, de-clutter and organize their things. Here are a few areas to focus on when tidying up your study space and your life this spring:

Switch out last season clothes: When the weather gets nicer you'll be able put those big bulky items away such as coats and sweaters and bring out "Florida weather clothing." Students who live close to campus can bring these items home, and those who live farther have the option of shipping or storing.

For those of you who don't want to ship or your clothes no longer fit, consider donating your clothes. You can ask any of your family members who have children who may fit in your old clothes, or if they know someone who needs clothes. If all else fails, Salvation Army or any thrift shop will be happy to take the clothes.

Organize and fold your clothes: Look for clothing that you may have shoved under your bed or between the corners of your furniture. Once you sort out what you will keep, organize your closet by putting similar items together and neatly folding jeans, shirts and other items. If you have a big closet, hang up some of your clothes so it will be easier for you to pick out an outfit when you are in a rush.

Old textbooks: Now let's look for those ripped up old textbooks that you never looked at again after finishing your classes. If you have any old textbooks or paperbacks you no longer need, you should consider selling them to a friend or back to your bookstore. Many bookstores have a buyback program, which means they will buy your books back if they are in good condition. There are also websites that you can sell them on such as Chegg and Amazon.

Paper items: Look around your room for trash. Go through your dresser, desk, closet or under your bed and get rid of any unnecessary things. Try not to be the person that starts cleaning and starts playing around with long lost items. Throw out those papers from last semester, old tickets, letters or any other scraps you find lying around. Also, don't forget to recycle.

Computer Files: Go through your desktop and documents and organize your files. Delete anything that you will not use such as old pictures or junk. Don't forget to take the time to back up your material on a flash drive, CD, external hard-drive or online to online storage sites such as Skydrive or Dropbox.

Lastly, just clean your room: Vacuum because there is a good chance that your floor needs it. Especially if you are a person who loves to eat in your dorm. Try to move as much as you can and vacuum under your bed, in your closet and behind large furniture. Then once you are all finished with cleaning, liven up your room a little. Move around the furniture, and add some color or new pictures that you have taken over the semester will bring life to your room.

If you are the type of person who never gets much done because you get distracted too easily or just hate cleaning, invite some friends over. Make it fun. Chances are a friend or two will be willing to help you organize your room.

Photo from WikiMedia Commons

Are you proud of your accomplishments?

Have you written an exciting or informative research paper, a short story, a play, or have a painting or photograph that you would like to showcase?

Academic Excellence Day

is a time for you to share these accomplishments with the Saint Leo University Community. Contact your advisor or professor to discuss presesnting your project during Academic Excellence Day on Thursday April 10, 2014

Campus News

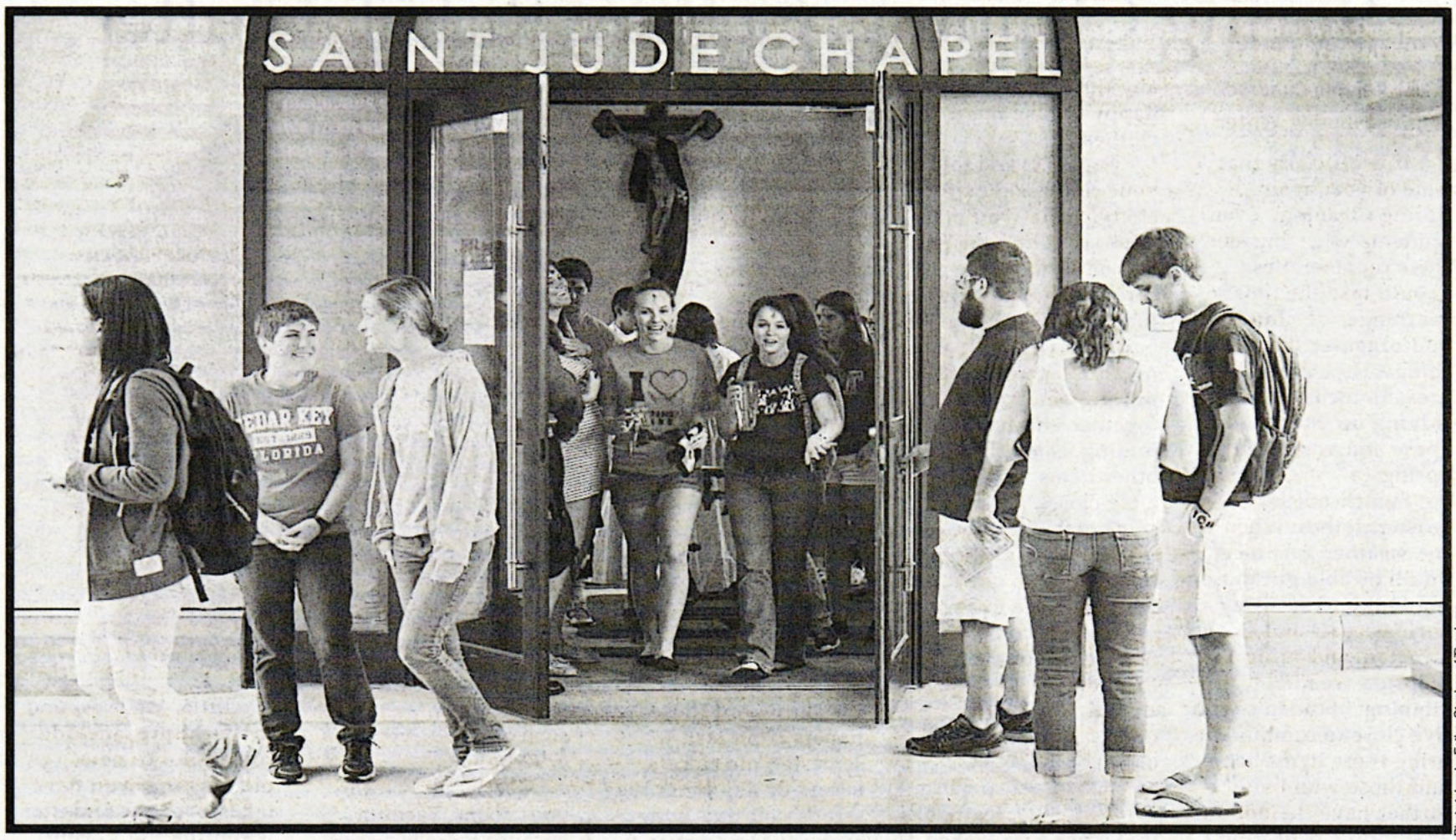

Photo taken by Father Stephan of Theology

Ash Wednesday and Campus Traditions

By Renee Goodwin
Contributing Writer

On March 5, many students could be seen around campus with the traditional crosses of ash on their foreheads. The ash crosses marked Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten season.

"(Wednesday is) the beginning of a time when we return to the lord, to remind us that we are ashes and to ashes we shall return. Ash Wednesday primarily serves as a time for us to repent and believe in the gospel, to change our lives to grow closer to God," said Father Stephan.

The ashes are given during Catholic Mass to serve as a reminder of human morality, an outward sign of mourning, and repentance to God. This year, the University held Mass multiple times: twice in the morning with Father Stephen and the Benedictine Monks and once in the evening with the Benedictine Sisters. Ashes were distributed throughout the day to students unable to attend church.

Ash Wednesday marks the largest turnout the University has seen. All five of the Ash Wednesday services were full. Both Father Stephen and University Ministry predict participation will continue to rise as the University grows.

"The increase in student participation in Ash Wednesday and the Lenten Season is credited to an increase in not only the general student population, but also an increase in the Catholic student population," said Father Stephan.

The rise in student participation could also be accredited to the popularity of Pope Francis who has fired up Catholics and non Catholics alike.

In his own words, Pope Francis has stated, "I want an evangelist Catholic Church."

The University joined together with the Benedictine Monks and the Benedictine Sisters for Ash Wednesday, allowing students to come together and pray as one in the Benedictine tradition. The day helped strengthen the relationship between the Benedictine Monks and the student community.

The 5:30 Mass offered in the monastery with the Benedictine Sisters had the highest student attendance.

"I was so happy that the University offered so many opportunities to go to Mass and receive ashes in an informal manner. It is a great feeling of community to receive the ashes with my peers and have a chance to pray together before entering the sacred season of Lent," said Freshman Zoee Brubaker.

"This Ash Wednesday has been an experience like no other, I feel that I now have a deeper understanding of how Jesus has changed my life for the better. Ash Wednesday used to be a topic I didn't really understand, however, this year my understanding has changed and I now see that in order to understand what he endured for us we must give up something we love because it is difficult, but we do this with the understanding that Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us. Through him alone we can overcome our own personal struggles," said Sophomore Danny Francois.

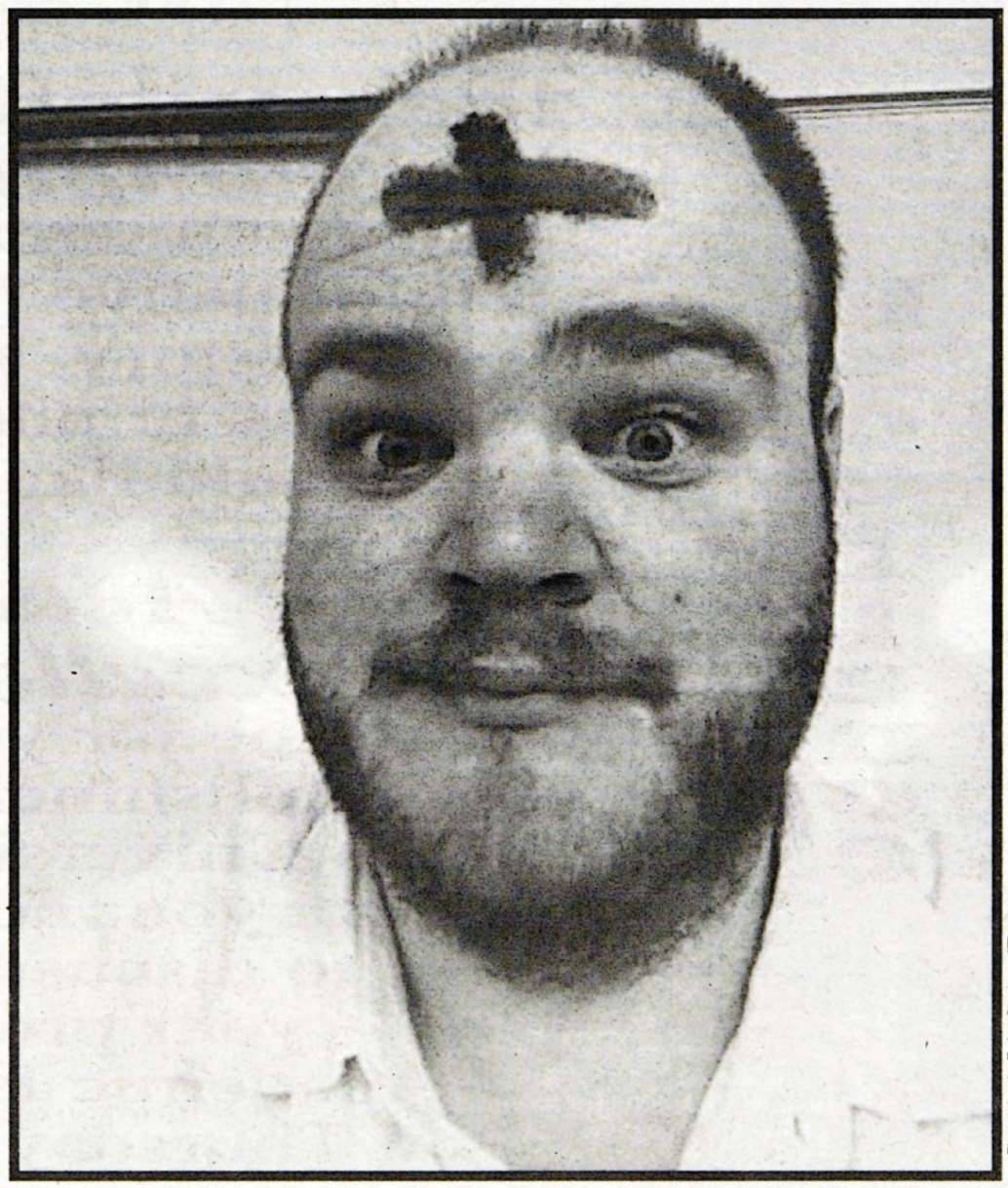

Photo taken by Father Stephan of Theology

Professor Dr. Stephen O'Key during The ash distribution at Saint Jude Chapel.

Local News

New Vending Machines Pave The Way To Healthier Snacking Choices

By Thomas Buckley
Contributing Writer

Vending machines have been serving sodas, chips and other unhealthy snacks and foods since the 1930's according to Vending.org. Just when everyone thought that all vending machines would go extinct in the next few years because of First Lady Michelle Obama's campaign to eat healthy, a new niche has been discovered in the vending machine market. Healthy vending machines are starting to pop up all around the country, in schools, universities, malls, airports, businesses and any other places where vending machines would usually be found.

Forget the 100 calorie packs, these new machines strictly hold healthy foods, even though most of these foods come in a wrapper, the ingredients on the back of the foods have only a few ingredients, and most of the foods are organic, some even gluten free. You won't find high fructose corn syrup, partially hydrogenated oils, MSG or anything processed in these vending machines. Some of the products that are sold in healthy vending machines include granola and protein bars, healthy chips and sodas, water, protein shakes, yogurt, milk, juice and even fresh fruits.

Many of these machines have become successful in schools, which have been the biggest home to unhealthy soda and snack machines. These new machines are making a statement and teaching and encouraging children to eat healthy. Bringing these vending machines to schools may not completely solve the childhood obesity epidemic, but it's definitely a step in the right direction.

Traditional vending machines have attracted people to them because of their convenience and being able to get a quick snack

Official White House Photo by Chuck Kennedy

Michelle Obama supports healthy vending machines.

or bite to eat. Now with the invention of these machines people don't have only unhealthy foods to choose from.

"I think that these kind of vending machines should be brought to campus for sure and the snacks that are in them are better than the snacks that you fill up on that make you tired later on," said Sophomore Marissa Elam.

"These new machines are making a statement and teaching and encouraging children to eat healthy."

The businesses behind these healthy vending machines are quite unique. Many vending machine companies franchise their machines to let people restock and manage the machines letting them be their own boss.

One of the most notable and popular healthy vending machine companies is H.U.M.A.N. Healthy vending, with H.U.M.A.N. (Helping Unite Mankind And Nutrition). H.U.M.A.N. was the first healthy vending company ever founded back in 2008 by Sean Kelly out of his dorm room. H.U.M.A.N. healthy vending has over 1,000 different types of machines all over the United States according to the H.U.M.A.N. Healthy Vending website. Many of these machines are different, some machines sell just snacks, some have TV screens on the top of them giving out health tips, some dispense cold drinks and they even have a fresh organic coffee machine. H.U.M.A.N. is also working on establishing a healthy market with a self-checkout register.

H.U.M.A.N. healthy vending has huge goals and supports the fight against the obesity epidemic. By 2015, they want to have 10,000 machines in all 50 States and change the eating habits of millions of Americans eating habits. Additionally 10% of their profits go to fighting childhood obesity according to the H.U.M.A.N. Healthy Vending website. They are not the only healthy vending machine company. There are a number of companies trying to do the same thing with the commitment to help everyone live healthier lives.

"Generally in vending machines, we see nothing but empty calories and non nutritious foods; and if these new machines carry more nutritious foods with whole grains and proteins, they are going to be much better choices than typical vending machine choices found on campus," said Matthew Luckie, the Instructor of Choosing Wellness and Weight Training.

Arts & Entertainment

Rainbow Road Will be Reborn in May

By Nicholas Santos
Staff Writer

Hiiisssss! "Mario Kart" fans know what that sound means – a Spiny "blue" shell is incoming – and players will be hearing that dreadful warning again soon, as it has been announced that "Mario Kart 8" is being released May 30.

According to Nintendo Japan's website, the newest entry in the long-running "Mario Kart" series has been given a worldwide release date of May 30.

"I'm extremely excited for the new "Mario Kart." It's the main title outside of the new Super Smash Bros. that makes me want a Wii U. I'm most excited to experience one of my favorite titles in HD," said Freshman Preston Stutzman.

At its core, 'Mario Kart' is a racing game; the goal of the game is to reach the finish line first. However, the series takes the concept a step further by allowing racers to fight and sabotage each other with weapons – also known as items – placed around the track. Each item takes only the press of a button to use, and each item gives players a better chance to win a race. These mechanics give "Mario Kart" an accessible yet deep feel, turning the series into one of the most well-known party games.

The "Mario Kart" series is an important piece of Nintendo's history. Mario and his friends have hosted races in the fictional Mushroom Kingdom for over twenty years, pioneering the kart racing genre in the early 1990s. A new game is added to the series with each new Nintendo system; it's been this way ever since the series' first game.

"'Mario Kart' is practically a traditional game in the sense that I've expected a new one every few years ever since I was a kid," said Maxx Howarth, freshman. "It reminds me a lot of the 'Harry Potter' movies."

With each new entry into the franchise, new features are added to enhance and freshen the gameplay of the series. For instance, "Mario Kart: Double Dash!!" introduced co-operative play, allowing two players to control a single kart and race together.

As another example, "Mario Kart 7" added gliders and propellers to the series. This allowed for racers to drive not only on land, but also underwater and in the air.

Perhaps the most iconic feature of the series, however, is something that has been in every game within it—Rainbow Road: the final racetrack of each game and, arguably, the most difficult. With each game, a new Rainbow Road is designed specifically to embrace whatever new gameplay features are brought to the table. "Mario Kart 8" is adding anti-gravity racing to the series—meaning that racers will now be able to race upside down or even on walls. These new features will affect the inevitable inclusion of Rainbow Road as well.

Rainbow Road is also known for its scenery and background music. Starry space, flashy surfaces, and insane risks all define Rainbow Road.

"Rainbow Road is possibly the most aggravating but most intellectually thought-out course throughout all of 'Mario Kart,'" said Cody Agen, freshman. "It doesn't always have the most graphic displays, but it makes up for this with its difficulty and its variety of colors."

Rainbow Road has evolved just as much as the games themselves have, becoming more complicated with each entry. Because of this, understanding Rainbow Road itself is a great way to understand the "Mario Kart" series' history.

The series itself began in 1992 with "Super Mario Kart" for the Super Nintendo. The simplest of the series in terms of gameplay, this game's Rainbow Road and was full of sharp ninety-degree turns. As a track hazard, Thwomps—giant, living bricks that crashed down on racers—were also included. This track was extremely narrow for having eight racers on it at a time; one wrong move could easily cause racers to fall off of the track.

"Mario Kart 64" was the second game in the series, released for the Nintendo 64 in 1996. With enhanced graphics, "Mario Kart 64" made Rainbow Road even more of a treat to look at with flashy images of characters gracing the stars. The entire track is lined with guardrails and is full of straightaways. This prevents even the clumsiest of racers from falling off the track. For this version, the challenge itself comes from the absurd length of the track—a single lap can take almost two full minutes to complete. Catching up to lead racers, even with the strongest of items, is no easy task in this edition of the track.

The Rainbow Road featured in "Mario Kart: Super Circuit" was full of twists, turns, and large, risky jumps, making it one of the most dangerous. Guardrails were also quite scarce here, and ninety-degree turns were plentiful. "Super Circuit" was released for the Game Boy Advance in 2001.

"Mario Kart: Double Dash!!" (2003), "Mario Kart DS" (2005), and "Mario Kart Wii" (2008) all featured Rainbow Roads each with a similar feel, but each with very different designs. "Mario Kart: Double Dash!!" featured a Rainbow Road suspended above a city. It included several twists and dangerous U-turns along with a rainbow-colored pipe that launched racers high into the air. "DS's" Rainbow Road included a corkscrew and a loop for some spiraling action. The Rainbow Road in "Mario Kart Wii" featured almost no guardrails at all and was full of half-pipes, jumps, and pitfalls. These games were released for the Nintendo GameCube, DS, and Wii respectively.

The most recent Rainbow Road appeared in "Mario Kart 7" for the Nintendo 3DS, released in 2011. This track featured two gliding sections, very little guardrails, and even included a trip to a moon with altered gravity.

"My favorite Rainbow Road would most likely have to be the one from 'Mario Kart: Double Dash!!,'" said Ravin Forde, senior. "For one, it was the only one I've ever encountered and the only one I was ever able to beat," he said.

With "Mario Kart 8" waiting just around the corner, Wii U owners everywhere will probably be screaming at the top of their lungs again as they try to keep themselves on the track – all with an anti-gravity twist.

When asked how well he thought he'd perform in "Mario Kart 8's" Rainbow Road for the first time, Matthew Martin, sophomore, didn't seem very confident as he considered the track's possible difficulty.

"I would definitely play like garbage. I wouldn't get first place – Rainbow Road's always been hard for me," said Forde. "I don't agree with how there's no barriers on the outside of the track, and that always causes a lot of problems. Maybe fourth or fifth—probably not last—but it wouldn't be what I would like it to be."

http://www.nintendo.co.jp/ir/library/events/140130/02.html
(Article stating Mario Kart 8's release window - Japanese)

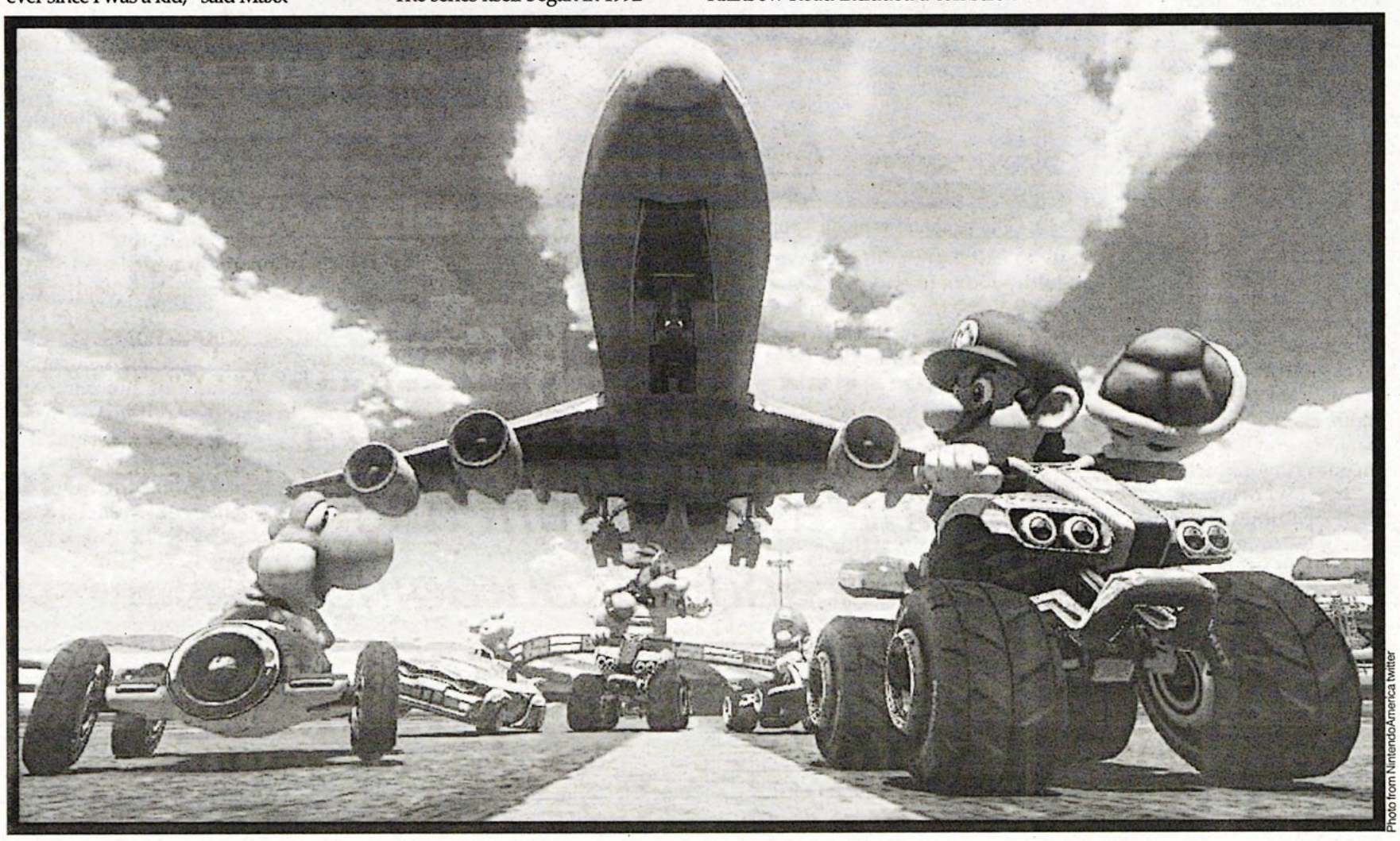

Photo from Nintendo America twitter

Arts & Entertainment

100 Happy Days Challenge Progresses

By Ally Vincent
Contributing Writer

With the usage of social media growing, it can be used for both negative and positive things. It all depends on the individual and what the social media portrays.

A recent fad that is slowly taking over social media is called 100 Happy Days. The reasoning behind this movement is that too often we, as humans, go through our day to day lives not recognizing all of the amazing things to be happy about. Due to the quickening pace of life, we have less and less time to truly appreciate the current moment. The 100 Happy Days movement believes that having the ability to appreciate the moment, the environment and yourself in it, is the base for happiness in any human being.

The 100 Happy Days is a challenge that encourages participants to post a picture daily using Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, or other social media sites. The picture is something that the individual finds in his/her day to day life that he/she is happy about.

Senior Katie Duffy is participating in the 100 Happy Days challenge. "I went on their site and was blown away by how genuine/unique the idea was," she said.

Katie has only been participating for a little over a week, so she has not noticed a big difference in her attitude, but she is excited to see if it does make a major impact in her attitude. She also noted that some days she would forget to post something that day, so she would find herself scrambling to write something.

Katie learned of the movement from one of her best friends, and she has also noticed that because of her posts on Facebook other people are starting to participate as well.

Some of the different things people post are their favorite foods, music that makes them smile, places, people, events, and a variety of other different things. What makes this project unique is the idea that different things make different people happy.

The 100 Happy Days says that by the end of this challenge, people should come out genuinely more happy and appreciative of the little things in life. It also mentioned that 71 percent of individuals that tried completing this challenge failed due to lack of time.

If you would like more information on this challenge go to the website http://100happydays.com/

The Vigilantes: The Ultimate Fear Parts 1&2

By Derek Richards

Campus News

Annual Education Conference

By Ally Vincent
Contributing Writer

On March 8, the Saint Leo University Education Department hosted their annual spring conference. This conference was held in the Ocala Center, at Central Florida College. The center is a great meeting point for all of the University's centers in Florida. There were education students from Palatka, Gainesville, Trenton, Lecanto, the University's main campus and other centers located around Florida.

This year's speaker was Dorina Sackman, 2014 Florida Teacher of the Year. Sackman has taught for fifteen years, working with students from third grade to high school. She has a lot of experience in working with middle school students whose native language is not English. These students are also known as an ELL's (English Language Learners). Sackman talked primarily about working with ELL's in the classroom, the passion of a teacher and the poverty the students in the classroom face on a daily basis. Sackman stressed that teachers must follow their hearts and passions. She refers to her "at-risk" students as "at-promise" students. Sackman lives by the acronym B.E.L.I.E.V.E, which stands for Be the Educators that Live to Inspire and Empower Via Excellence. This workshop was highly interactive, engaging and taught every single individual something new. Junior Patty Byrnes is currently a block 2 intern at the university campus.

" I really enjoyed that we had to move from our seats to meet other individuals that would make us uncomfortable," said Byrnes.

One of the best things about the speaker was the she was very honest about the profession and she reminded everyone that they could set the expectation for teachers just by the way they hold and talk about themselves. This stuck out to Senior Carissa Trennepohl who is currently in her final internship at Woodland Elementary.

Photo from Microsoft Clipart

"The speaker did not sugar coat anything; she told us how things happened in the classroom, but was still encouraging," said Trennepohl.

The conference provided opportunities for everyone to converse amongst their tables and around the whole room. Sackman also talked to everyone at a level that was personable. Sackman believes that all teachers are on the same level.

"I like how she talked to us off the stage, versus being at the podium," said Byrnes.

Most everyone there left with a refreshing outlook on teaching and smiles on their faces.

"The refreshments were refreshing. The speaker was superb. The location satisfied the needs of the conference," said Carissa.

It's Never Too Late to Pass a Class

By Kelanie Cuadrado
Contributing Writer

Congrats! You have finally made it through midterms. Some of you will be happy with your grades, while others realize it is time to get your head in the books. The countdown to the end of the semester is on its way, and all we can think about is summer break. Even if you have an A or a B in your class, you shouldn't slack off just because the end of the semester is approaching. Now is the time when you need to put forth your best effort in order to finish your academic semester strong. Here are some tips that can help you improve your grade.

Have a schedule. Do not wait until the last minute to read a twenty page chapter for a test the following day. When you put off the homework until the very last minute, you will not learn the material properly. Yes, you may get the work done, but it will not be your best work. If you come up with a schedule to do your readings. You can do things better and use your time wisely. You will have the time to read the text and be a critical thinker while doing your assignments. You will also be able to invest more time an effort into your assignment.

Talk with the professor. If you haven't talked with your professor before or after class, it may be a good idea for you to make an appointment. Find out your professor's schedule and stop by their office hours to talk to them about the class or just get to know them better. A teacher will almost always be more understanding towards a student who takes the time to talk with them. You can use this time to ask about any questions or concerns you may have. Your instructor may even be generous and give you some advice.

Plea for extra credit. When you hear the word extra credit, you better be listening to your instructor, whether you have a good grade or not. While extra credit and paper rewrites are almost always a good option for boosting grades, many professors will have little sympathy for students who wait until the last day of classes to ask for it. Start talking with your teacher now if you think extra credit will benefit you on how you can earn a passing grade.

Participate for easy points. A class participation grade is arguably the easiest grade you can earn. If you have been on the quieter side in class, share your opinions during a discussion or even ask your professor a question to get your voice heard. If you are not participating in class, how does your instructor even know that you are paying attention? When you ask questions you are also more likely to learn more in the class.

Study ahead. If you have extra time in the next few weeks, start organizing old study guides, notes and even handouts. You can make an effort to go to the Learning Resource Lab or library to get tutoring or any kind of help you need. Don't wait until the last minute and expect your instructor to give you a good grade when you know you could have put in more effort. Studying over time and taking the effort to review your notes daily will ultimately be more beneficial in the end.

Avoid skipping class. I get it. It is almost winter break and you feel like all you have done is work. Many students find themselves tempted to use up their number of allowed absences, but having a consistent attendance record will almost always benefit you. This way you will be able to gather any last minute information before finals while showing your professor you take their class seriously. Remember once you start skipping a few days you start to want to skip more. Be careful on what days you skip on. Don't skip on the day you know you have a presentation or project due because that could lead to getting a zero and failing the course.